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### NEWS RELEASE

During the week of April 6<sup>th</sup> through the 12<sup>th</sup>, 2003, crime victims, service providers, criminal and juvenile justice professionals, and community volunteers will join together across America to commemorate the 23<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of National Crime Victims' Rights Week. This year's theme, "Victims' Rights: Fulfill the Promise," emphasizes America's promise to victims to treat them with dignity and compassion; to help identify and meet their most important needs; and to provide them with information about their statutory and constitutional rights, as well as advocacy to help them implement their rights.

According to Paul Bucher, Waukesha County District Attorney, America's "promise" to victims cannot be kept without the recognition that when crime affects one person, it affects us all.

"The domino affect of criminal victimization is tremendous," Bucher said. "The physical, emotional and financial devastation a victim suffers has repercussions that touch us all – in our homes, our neighborhoods, our schools, in our workplaces and beyond."

Jennifer Miller, Waukesha County Victim/Witness Director, further noted, "Our promise to victims – of support and services to help them in the aftermath of crime – requires the commitment and compassion of *anyone* to whom a victim might turn for help. We are extremely fortunate in Waukesha County to have the assistance of a number of agencies and individuals victims can rely on for dedicated and informed help."

"National Crime Victims' Rights Week is a good time to honor those who work hard to assist crime victims and to protect and promote their rights. The Waukesha District Attorney's Office is grateful to the staff of the Victim/Witness and Mobile Victim Assistance Programs for their continued, devoted efforts to improving the experience of crime victims in the criminal justice system."

In an effort to recognize the exemplary victim service provided by other county agencies, District Attorney Bucher nominated several departments for 2003 Victim

Advocacy Awards. "We simply could not provide the services we do without the outstanding collaboration we enjoy with local law enforcement, dispatchers, and criminal justice system representatives. We appreciate their dedicated assistance to us and the community."

Of the agencies nominated, three departments were recognized by the Wisconsin Victim Witness Professionals Association. The Waukesha County Sheriff's Department Dispatchers and the Mobile Victim Assistance Volunteers/On-Call Advocates received honorable mentions for their service to crime victims. The Waukesha County Medical Examiner's Office will receive a 2003 Victim Advocacy Award.

"When you think of organizations that serve crime victims, the Medical Examiner's Office probably doesn't immediately leap to mind," Bucher said, "But we have noticed a consistently high level of service provided to families of homicide victims and to our office by Dr. Biedrzycki and her staff. We are pleased they were chosen to receive this recognition."

The Waukesha County Medical Examiner's Office will receive the award on Tuesday, April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2003 at the State Capitol Rotunda in a ceremony commemorating National Crime Victims' Rights Week.

"Waukesha County law enforcement agencies, dispatchers, and the staff and volunteers of the Victim/Witness Program deserve recognition for their steadfast efforts," said Miller, "We thank them for their commitment to crime victims and the community."